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## **THESIS**

**MALAYSIAN EMERGENCIES - ANTHROPOLOGICAL  
FACTORS IN THE SUCCESS OF MALAYSIA'S  
COUNTERINSURGENCY**

by

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December 2004

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**MALAYSIAN EMERGENCIES - ANTHROPOLOGICAL FACTORS IN  
THE SUCCESS OF MALAYSIA'S COUNTERINSURGENCY**

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## **ABSTRACT**

Malaysia does not seem to follow the conventional pattern of a larger power that uses stronger military force to gain a better security posture. Instead, Malaysia has chosen to adopt the more encompassing approach that defines national security as “the capacity of the society to protect individuals, groups and the nation from physical and socio-economic danger”. Given this approach, which is almost anthropological in nature, Malaysia has been able to promote a form of national ideology acceptable to all communities, and has thereby provided a common basis for achieving and maintaining peace and harmony. A stringent internal security law was re-enacted to sustain this peace in 1969, as well as to curb any threat from future insurgents and terrorists. In addition, the government created a development and security plan known as KESBAN in 1979 to win the hearts and minds of the population and launched massive border operations with Thailand in 1974 until 1978 to block the egress and exit routes of communists. As a result of such efforts the Malaysian government’s overall containment policy was successful and the Malaysian government managed to secure the communists’ surrender in December 1989. In addition to examining the success of the British and Malaysia in the Malayan Emergencies this thesis will also offer some lessons drawn from these successes for the current war on terrorism.

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Guerrilla warfare, particularly in its early stages, is extremely resistant to conventional military force because the massed systems that dominate mainstream operations cannot engage the guerrilla force. Indeed, even if collateral damage was not an issue, and it almost always is, the mass annihilation or deportation of a population does not, in itself, guarantee the elimination of the guerilla force. So long as a single survivor knows the location of the weapons caches, the guerrilla movement can readily revive itself.

Therefore, in modern military thinking, a second, parallel military structure has emerged: counterinsurgency forces. Operating under various names, counterinsurgency troops try to overcome the lack of surgical precision of conventional forces. More importantly, such forces typically organize operations designed to drive a wedge between the guerrillas and the population. This is the main concern of this thesis. The problems of counter-terrorism seem striking. How do we pinpoint the enemy in order to destroy enemy forces and their capabilities?

The present US strategy for combating terrorism relies very much on the concept of the battle of ideas. But such efforts are likely to be far easier with consideration of the kind of anthropological factors that can strike deep at the heart of the people. It is the contention of this thesis that counterinsurgency and counter-terrorism efforts can be successful only if military strategy is blended with consideration of anthropological factors to win public support and earn the public's cooperation in devising a model appropriate for the local situation.

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

**"Guerilla warfare is the war of the weak against the strong...  
Guerilla war cannot bring final victory".**

**General Nasution – Indonesia**

### **A. BACKGROUND**

The aftermath of World War II left the world a number of legacies and a series of minor wars. Although these were little wars, they were still big enough to the men who had to fight them. One of the first of these wars was against the Communists in Malaya. The success of the communists in China in the late 1940's had boosted the morale of communists worldwide and the domino effect was felt in Malaya as well.<sup>1</sup>

Malaya in the 1940's was a country that consisted of four-fifths jungle. Most of this jungle was primary forest, land that had never been cleared for use. Huge trees blocked out most of the sunlight in these coastal forests and swamps. Because of the density of the trees visibility was cut, in places, to only a few yards. The armed wing of the Malayan Communist Party (MCP) took advantage of this terrain and utilized it as their area of operation. MCP felt that it was time to overthrow the 'Capitalist and Imperialist' government and so began to wage war by means of insurgency against first the British Government and later the Malaysian government.

In 1947 the MCP had 12,590 members and was divided into 10 regiments, spread throughout the Malayan peninsula. MCP began its armed resistance against the government in 1948. The 1<sup>st</sup> Malayan Emergency was declared by Britain in 1948 in response to the insurgent movement launched by the MCP, whose guerrilla forces were labeled Communist Terrorists (CT).

After initial setbacks, the British adapted a wide range of civil-military initiatives, including the Briggs Plan, which involved a massive resettlement of

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<sup>1</sup> My Far East: The Emergency 1948-1960. Retrieved May 4, 2004 from <http://www.myfareast.org/Malaysia/emergency.html>.

thousands of people from jungle areas where they were vulnerable to guerrilla intimidation to the relative security of new villages. Britain also prepared the local people for independence, which was granted in August 1957 when Malaya became Malaysia. By 1960, the 1<sup>st</sup> Emergency was practically over and, indeed, the Malaysian government declared the end of the Emergency in July, 1960. The remnants of the once formidable communist forces remained mostly in secluded areas near the border with Thailand.<sup>2</sup>



Table 1. Map of Malayan Peninsula during period of Malayan Emergencies.

<sup>2</sup> Jay Gordon Simpson, Not by Bombs Alone: Lessons from Malaya, Joint Force Quarterly Summer 1999 (No.22). Retrieved May 4, 2004 from [http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/jfq\\_pubs/sum99.htm](http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/jfq_pubs/sum99.htm).

A multi-racial country such as Malaysia is fragile and is built along ethnic lines that do not map on to class distinctions. The one unfortunate racial clash-in particular that of May 13, 1969-was used by remnants of the CPM along the Malaysia/Thailand border to revive their effort to take over the government. This gave rise to what was later known as the 2<sup>nd</sup> Malayan Emergency. The communists once again became active and started to indoctrinate the people at all levels, from government officials to trade unionists, to include the armed forces, police, and members of the middle class. At the same time, the communists were promoting their communist ideology, their goal was to cripple the government and create political instability by rendering the economy a shambles. They sought to achieve this via a popular uprising as well as through armed struggle. The communist party's main targets were the middle and lower classes living in remote and rural areas. In many respects, this was no different from what communists were trying to achieve elsewhere. However, Malaysia's response was distinct from that of other countries experiencing communist insurgencies.

From its inception, Malaysia chose not to follow the conventional pattern of a larger power that uses stronger military force to gain a better security posture. Instead, the Malaysian government adopted the more advanced, encompassing, and holistic approach that defines national security as "the capacity of the society to protect individuals, groups and the nation from physical and socio- economic danger."

Given this approach, which is almost anthropological in nature, the Malaysian authorities have been able to promote a form of national ideology acceptable to all communities, and have thereby provided a common basis for achieving and maintaining peace and harmony. A stringent internal security law was also enacted in 1969 to sustain this peace, as well as to curb any threat from future insurgents and terrorists. In addition, the government created a development and security plan known as KESBAN to win the hearts and minds of the population and launched massive border operations with Thailand to block the entry and exit routes of communists. As a result of such efforts the Malaysian

government's overall containment policy proved successful and the Malaysian government managed to secure the communists' surrender in December 1989.<sup>3</sup> What it took to reach this point is what this thesis hopes to reveal.

In support of these arguments this paper draws inspiration from the words of the former Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad when he told 40 journalists attending the East Asia Economic Summit, that "removing Iraq's President Saddam Hussein from power and bringing democracy to Iraq would not solve problems affecting that country, nor tackle international terrorism effectively. He said President Bush was taking the wrong approach in fighting terrorism because Americans were angered by the Sept. 11 attacks, and angry people usually do not think rationally. Fighting terrorism requires rooting out its causes, he said, and in Malaysia's historical experience of combating terrorist insurgency, citizens who feel they have a stake in the country, eventually abandon their fight".<sup>4</sup>

## **B. HYPOTHESES**

The following are my hypotheses:

1. The surrender of the Malaysian Communists in 1989 to the Malaysian government was due to the fact that the government planners understood the direct effect of including what I call anthropological factors into their overall strategy.
2. The counterinsurgency warfare (CIW) model still being used by the British and other countries needs to take into more explicit consideration various anthropological factors, in order to be able to sustain operations given current trends in the changing nature of insurgent threats.

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<sup>3</sup> The Washington Post, Rebels End Insurgency in Malaysia; Communists Accept Peace after 41 Years: [FINAL Edition], Washington, D.C (Dec 3, 1989), 33.

<sup>4</sup> Gail G. Billington, Malaysia's Mahathir: Back to Production, Dump Globalization October 18, 2002 issue of Executive Intelligence Review. Retrieved May 20, 2004 from [http://www.larouchepub.com/other/2002/2940\\_mahathir.html](http://www.larouchepub.com/other/2002/2940_mahathir.html).

3. Internal security law is one of the key factors that made a difference in Malaysia among formerly communist sympathizers and supporters.
4. Bilateral agreements and understandings reached with neighboring countries must be emphasized to block external interference and support from reaching the insurgents.

### **C. AREA OF RESEARCH**

This thesis intends to study the success of the British and Malaysian governments in combating insurgency during the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Malayan Emergencies. The purpose of the study is to examine how the Malaysian model of counterinsurgency, plus appropriate consideration of domestic anthropological factors, can yield a feasible model to be used in future counterinsurgency warfare. The thesis will discuss the historical background and method of operation of the Malayan Communist Party, the planning concept and execution of counterinsurgency undertaken by first the British and then the Malaysian governments, and social analysis of the Malaysian population during and after these Emergencies. The thesis will also draw some lessons for the War on Terrorism based on the Malaysian experience in handling subversive activities.

### **D. METHODOLOGY**

The first part of this thesis will provide an overview of the main players in the conflict in Malaysia. The discussion will describe both sides' organization, areas of operation, techniques, and operational plans. These observations will be based on material gathered from primary and secondary sources. As well I will draw on some participant-observation and personal experiences. The purpose of this discussion is to identify the various anthropological factors that were used by the players to achieve their strategic objectives. This discussion will be the subject of Chapter II.

Chapter III will then analyze the usefulness of such anthropological factors in shaping the success or failure of the overall operations. This chapter will draw

on opinions and views expressed in interviews with participants. Differences in local environments will be highlighted to identify the suitability of the various anthropological factors for counterinsurgency warfare and counter-terrorism.

In Chapter IV I will identify and compare models that were used in Vietnam with those applied in Malaysia in order to highlight similarities as well as differences. In conclusion, the thesis will re-examine the hypothesis and determine whether the proposed model is suitable for use in future counterinsurgency and counter-terrorism efforts outside Malaysia.

## **E. RELEVANCY**

Although conventional warfare remains the basic structure for how we model modern war, the present threat that the United States discovered in Iraq, and the Soviet Union discovered in Afghanistan suggest a change in focus is long overdue, particularly among strategic thinkers. The huge force structure needed in the conventional setting is not particularly effective against guerrilla forces.

Guerrilla warfare, particularly in its early stages, is extremely resistant to the successful application of conventional military force because the massed systems that dominate mainstream operations cannot engage the guerrilla forces. Indeed, even if collateral damage was not an issue, and it almost always is, the mass annihilation or deportation of a population does not, in itself, guarantee the elimination of the guerrilla force. So long as a single survivor knows the location of weapons caches, the guerrilla movement can readily revive itself.

Therefore, in modern military thinking, a second, parallel military structure has emerged: counterinsurgency forces. Operating under various names, counterinsurgency troops try to overcome the lack of surgical precision of conventional forces. More importantly, such forces need to organize operations designed to drive a wedge between the guerrillas and population. This is the main concern of this thesis. The problems of counter-terrorism seem particularly



striking. How do we separate the insurgent from the population and pin point the enemy in order to destroy his forces?

The present US strategy for combating terrorism relies very much on the concept of the battle of ideas. But such efforts are likely to be far easier with the full utilization of anthropological factors that strike deep at the heart of the people. It is the contention of this thesis that counterinsurgency and counter-terrorism can be successful only if military strategy is blended with consideration of anthropological factors to win public support and earn the public's cooperation in devising a model appropriate for the local situation.

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## II. PLANNING AND EXECUTION

**“Revolutionaries are like fish that swim in the water of people; defeating insurgents is then a matter of separating the fish from the water”**

**Mao**

### **A. MALAYAN COMMUNIST PARTY**

Taken together, the Malayan Emergencies comprise an intense 41 year guerrilla war fought by the British, British Commonwealth, and Malaysian forces against the armed wing of the MCP led by Ching Peng. A strong believer in communism, Ching Peng who took over command of MCP from Lai Teck (the founder and first leader of MCP) in 1947 was ideologically confident of victory and claimed that armed struggle was the only way forward for the Chinese in Malaya.<sup>5</sup> The external encouragement and support that he gained further strengthened his assertion about achieving control over Malaya and, in 1948, insurgent activities intensified against the British government of Malaya.

Historically, communist activity started when the influence of communism in China was brought into Malaya by the Chinese immigrants who came to work in the tin mining industry in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. This new ethnic group distrusted the government. Also, Chinese racial attitudes clearly set them apart from the indigenous Malay who comprised the main ethnic group in Malaya and whom the British favored.<sup>6</sup> The Chinese also brought with them their Chinese traditional of informal associations that provided group security to Chinese in mainland China and elsewhere.<sup>7</sup> We could say the MCP, which was established in the late 1930's, borrowed heavily from the secret society model.

This new party targeted the Chinese and sought to serve as their protector. Because the MCP's attempt to influence the other races failed it continued to be dominated by the Chinese throughout both Emergencies. Not

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<sup>5</sup> Ibid., 27.

<sup>6</sup> Sarkesian, *Unconventional Conflicts in a New Security Era: Lesson from Malaya and Vietnam* (Greenwood Press, 1993), 60.

<sup>7</sup> Milne, *Malaysia: Tradition, Modernity, and Islam*. (Westview Press, 1986), 15 - 20.

only did the MCP operate as a political movement, but it claimed to offer the Chinese people their only hope in the political arena. If they submitted, the MCP would strive to protect the Chinese interests as well as create an avenue for participation in political matters in the overall administration of Malaya. By 1934, not only had branches of the party been established in all the states on the peninsula of Malaya, but its membership (including members of affiliated organizations) had grown to 12,716.<sup>8</sup>

What, we might wonder, were the motivating factors that would have attracted the Chinese to associate in such large numbers and so rapidly with the MCP? There may be other answers to this question, but the separation between Chinese and Malay communities, together with apparent culture differences in language, religion and practices provide the likeliest answer.<sup>9</sup> These differences helped convince the Chinese that a communist state could offer them a better way of life than could the British government. Such attitudes and views made many Chinese sympathetic to the promises of the MCP, especially since they also felt that they, as Chinese, were superior to the Malays, and that communism was a superior form of government, as proven by mainland China.<sup>10</sup>

The already antagonistic relationship between the Chinese and the indigenous Malays deteriorated further in the aftermath of WW II, a situation that provided an atmosphere particularly favorable to insurgent activities.<sup>11</sup> The action taken by the British to establish the Malayan Union immediately after WWII annoyed the MCP which felt it should be given priority over the Malays in the administration of Malaya. Acknowledging that a communist state would not be a possibility once the British government proposed the Malayan Union in 1946, the MCP decided to agitate in the Chinese communities. It also reactivated and in 1949 renamed its armed wing, which was formally known as the MPAJA, as the

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8 Coates, *Suppressing Insurgency: An analysis of The Malayan Emergency, 1948-1954*. (Westview Press, 1992), 9.

9 Sarkesian, *Unconventional Conflicts in a New Security Era: Lesson from Malaya and Vietnam*. (Greenwood Press, 1993), 60.

10 Luvien Pye, *Guerrilla Communism in Malaya*. (Princeton University Press, 1956), 207.

11 Stubbs, Richard 1989. *Hearts and minds in guerrilla warfare: the Malayan emergency, 1948-1960*, Singapore. (New York: Oxford University Press), 46.

Malayan Races Liberation Army (MRLA).<sup>12</sup> This armed wing which was supported by the British during WW II played a major role in the efforts to evict the Japanese from Malaya. Legally, the armed wing was disbanded by the British when it took over the administration of Malaya after the Japanese surrender. However, the abiding legacies of the MPAJA's participation in WWII held important consequences for the MCP's future.

The fact that a large quantity of arms and ammunition had been provided by the British to the MPAJA during WW II for fighting the Japanese helped make an armed insurrection possible. By July 1948 the MCP was unveiling its plan to oppose the Malayan government openly and, on July 23rd, the Malayan Government responded by declaring the MCP an unlawful society.<sup>13</sup> Despite this declaration, the MCP claimed to be nationalists fighting 'to rid the British imperialists and their lackeys, especially the group of feudalists and other running dogs headed by the Malay Sultans'.<sup>14</sup> The objective was to replace the present government with a new Malayan People's (Chinese) Republic.

In fighting for their cause, the MCP invoked a protracted three-phase campaign strategy. The three phases, following Mao Tse Tung's successful model, were a terror campaign to be conducted by raiding and killing European planters, tin miners, high ranking government servant and police officers; destabilization of the government by depriving it of effective control, thus undermining the confidence of the population and their faith in their colonial rulers and the Malaysian Government; seizure of villages and towns in order to turn them "into liberated areas" and thus encircle bigger towns, leaving the federal capital of Kuala Lumpur for the final assault.<sup>15</sup>

Apart from the above strategy, the MCP relied heavily on the Chinese communities which comprised one third of the total population at the outset of the insurgency to provide support. The use of Min Yuen, otherwise known as the

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., 87.

<sup>13</sup> The Virgin Soldiers: Malayan Communist Party 1948-1960, retrieved 21/6/2004 from <http://www.britains-smallwars.com/malaya/mcp.html#smm4>.

<sup>14</sup> Barber, Noel. The War of the Running Dogs – The Malayan Emergency: 1948 – 1960.(Weybright and Talley,1972).

<sup>15</sup> John Coates, Suppressing Insurgency: an analysis of the Malayan Emergency, 1948-1954.(Westview Press, 1992),51.

People's Movement, consisting of Chinese who largely resided in the Chinese squatter villages or along the jungle fringe, was significant in the overall struggle. They provided intelligence as well as logistical support to the main insurgents whose bases were mostly deep in the jungle. The British estimated in 1952 that active working members of the Min Yuen numbered about 11,000 (of whom 3,500 to 4,000 were armed), while active insurgents numbered about 12,000.<sup>16</sup>

Because, too, the Chinese had always been passionate about education, particularly members of the coolie class who viewed education as the key to escaping their poverty, the MCP found itself with a golden opportunity to indoctrinate youth with their Maoist ideology. They considered school to be a source of recruits for the party and they started building schools.<sup>17</sup> Having found themselves able to take advantage of the Chinese desire for education, it should not then be surprising that almost the entire rank and file of the MRLA, as well as the Min Yuen, could be characterized as formerly uneducated Chinese.

The MCP in its attempt to expand its influence in Malaya also sought to persuade the aboriginal tribes to join it. Learning from its WW II experience, the MCP took advantage of employing aboriginal tribes or 'Orang Asli', as an intelligence screen and provisioning agency against the British. For this purpose, a special organization was set up, called the '*asa*' (a Malay word meaning 'original' or aboriginal).<sup>18</sup> The MCP forces, with crucial assistance from the aboriginal tribes, easily slipped away from the British whenever they engaged in large-scale search and destroy type operations. The British did not know about the *asa* until late 1953.<sup>19</sup> The aboriginal tribes were continuously used by the MRLA during the Malayan Emergencies.<sup>20</sup>

In summary, the Chinese were alienated from the British colonial government and even more so from the Malayan community. Their primary anger

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16 Komer, R. The Malayan Emergency in Retrospect: Organization of a Successful Counterinsurgency Effort, Santa Monica, California. (RAND, 1972), 8.

17 Mackay, The Malayan Emergency 1948-60: The Domino That Stood. (Brassey's (UK) Ltd., 1997), 21.

18 Carey, Orang Asli: The Aboriginal Tribes of Peninsular Malaysia. (Oxford University Press, 1976), 310.

19 Roy Davis, Death waits in the Dark: The Senoi Praaq, Malaysia's Killer Elite. (Greenwood Press, 2001), 40.

20 Mackay, The Malayan Emergency 1948-60: The Domino That Stood, (Brassey's (UK) Ltd., 1997), 11.

was directed at the Malay community. Later, a number of Chinese began to feel that communism offered a way to change the British-Malay system.<sup>21</sup>

## **B. THE BRITISH PLAN**

The British Army in Malaya at this time consisted of 11 battalions of British, Gurkha, and Malay troops. The number of guerrillas bearing arms outnumbered the actual fighting men of the British Army as most battalions were under strength.<sup>22</sup> The Army's first task was to conduct a holding operation, keeping the guerrillas on the move by constant searching, patrolling and ambushing.

The main problem faced by the British was that throughout the country there were some 600,000 squatters who lived on the fringes of the jungle on land to which they had no real title or right. The guerrillas used these settlements as a refuge and to store food.<sup>23</sup> As Mao pointed out, the insurgent needs the support of the population as the fish needs water. Due to this situation, the government decided to uproot and resettle these squatters in 'New Villages' where they could be isolated from the guerrillas. In these villages they were able to build their own houses and receive farmland that was to be legally theirs. This is the famous 'Briggs Plan' that was first introduced in Malaya by General Briggs who was appointed as the Director of Operation Malaya in 1950.<sup>24</sup>

By the end of 1951, more than two-thirds of the squatters were living in 509 New Villages. The plan proceeded well and assisted in the effort to reduce communist influence.<sup>25</sup> The communists were thus cut off from their usual food supplies and were forced to move into the jungle areas. At the same time, a reward system was set up whereby persons giving information leading to the capture of communist insurgents were awarded cash bounties. This led many

21 Sarkesian, *Unconventional Conflicts in a New Security Era: Lesson from Malaya and Vietnam*. (Greenwood Press, 1993), 61.

22 Mackay, *The Malayan Emergency 1948-60: The Domino That Stood*. (Brassey's (UK) Ltd., 1997), 36.

23 Onwar.con (December, 16,2000). *The Malayan Emergency 1948-1960*, retrieved 11/ 3/ 2003, from <http://www.onwar.com/aced/data/mike/malaya1948.htm>.

24 John Coates, *Suppressing Insurgency: an analysis of the Malayan Emergency, 1948-1954*.(Westview Press, 1992),82.

25 Barber, Noel. *The War of the Running Dogs – The Malayan Emergency: 1948 – 1960*.(Weybright and Talley,1972), 99.

communist insurgents who surrendered to then offer information about their former comrades' activities and, with this intelligence, the guerrillas' tactics as well as their movements were known.<sup>26</sup>

Throughout the Emergency the Government maintained a policy of policing villages rather than destroying them, and of "winning the hearts and minds" of the people. Winning the hearts and minds of the people was deemed so important that the government had to change its military strategy and tactics. For instance, extensive use of the Air Force in aerial bombing and strategic bombing was prohibited to avoid collateral damage that could affect the civilians. The new roles of the Air Force in guerrilla warfare became air reconnaissance; dropping of supplies to Army units operating in jungles; evacuating casualties; and providing mobility for the Security Forces with helicopters which were used very effectively to move troops from one point to another when searching out and subsequently attacking suspected camps.<sup>27</sup>

The normal tactic of search and destroy was used widely but with some modification. Unlike the American policy in Vietnam where soldiers would come and go in conducting search and destroy operation, the British and Malaysian soldiers played the guerrillas' game by living out in the jungle for weeks in order to ambushing them. The general population felt secure from MCP threats thanks to the regular and semi-permanent presence of the government troops. By 1953 these tactics had succeeded in forcing Chin Peng, the leader of the MCP during the Emergency, to move his headquarters into Thailand. He had not been able to establish *any* liberated areas, and by the end of 1958 there were only 250 guerrillas operating in Malaya.

On 31 August 1957 the Federation of Malaya became an independent country within the Commonwealth and by 31 July 1960 the 'Emergency' was officially over and all emergency restrictions were lifted except in the immediate area of the Thai border where remnants of the MCP lived in the remote regions

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<sup>26</sup> Mackay, *The Malayan Emergency 1948-60: The Domino That Stood*. (Brassey's (UK) Ltd., 1997), 129.

<sup>27</sup> Jay Gordon Simpson, *Not by Bombs Alone: Lessons from Malaya*, Joint Force Quarterly Summer 1999 (No.22). Retrieved May 4, 2004 from [http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/jfq\\_pubs/sum99.htm](http://www.dtic.mil/doctrine/jel/jfq_pubs/sum99.htm).



of the jungle.<sup>28</sup> The table below indicates the chronological events of the 1<sup>st</sup> Malayan Emergency.

YEAR	EVENTS
1930	- The establishment of the Malayan Communist Party (MCP).
1943	- British support the establishment of MPAJA.
1945	- British take over the administration of Malaya after WWII. The British disband the MPAJA and legalized the MCP.
1946	- Malayan Union.
1947	- MCP reactivates MPAJA.
1948	- The declaration of the 1 <sup>st</sup> Malayan Emergency. MCP is declared illegal.
1949	- MPAJA is renamed MRLA
1950/1952	Implementation of the Briggs Plan – Chinese New Village. The enforcement of Hearts and Minds Program under Templer. The formalization and expansion of the Home Guards. The establishment of combined intelligence in the Police Special Branch.
1953	MCP headquarters moves to the border of Thailand.
1957	Malaya received independence.
1960	The declaration of the end of then 1 <sup>st</sup> Emergency.

Table 2. Chronological Events of the 1<sup>st</sup> Malayan Emergency.

### C. MALAYSIAN FOLLOW-UP PLAN

The official declaration of the end of the Emergency in 1960 signaled that the communist threat was physically finished. Nonetheless, the task of combating the remnants of the MCP was far from over. The shift in objectives from armed struggle to promoting communist ideology by the MCP complicates the situation. Indeed, propaganda designed to undermine the Constitution that, as established, provided special status and political privileges to the Malays, began to shake the newly independent state of Malaysia.<sup>29</sup> From 1960 to 1969, the MCP who

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 148.

<sup>29</sup> Frederica M. Bunge, *Malaysia: A Country Study*, 1984, Foreign Area Studies. (Headquarters, Department of the Army, DA Pam 550-45), 104.

operated from the secluded areas of the Malaysian/Thai border rebuilt their strength to the point where it was thought that Chin Peng was able to regroup as many as 2,000 guerrillas. Quietly, the MCP sent out 'Shock Brigades', which were small units that moved south, down the peninsula, attempting not only to pick off isolated police posts and Security Forces jungle patrols, but also to rekindle support for the MCP via propaganda.<sup>30</sup>

The economic problems during the immediate post-independence era made some of the Chinese New Villages and the Chinese community at large susceptible to the propaganda and threats of the communist 'Shock Brigades'. It should be obvious by the events of the following days that the most basic agreement between the races in the pre-independence era had been fraught with bad faith and misunderstanding just beneath the surface all along due to the different values in traditional practices. With the total withdrawal of the British military in 1967, the MCP took advantage of the situation to reorganize its armed struggle and instigated the Chinese to riot in 1969. The black day of May 13 marks the beginning of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Malayan Emergency.<sup>31</sup>

The mass amok which took place in Kuala Lumpur, the capital city of Malaysia, and a few other states after the general election in 1969, escalated into a fatal racial riot. The insults and abuse hurled at the Malays by unruly Opposition activists and sympathizers (mostly Chinese) who, for the last few years had been inspired by the communist propaganda and the underground movement, try to take control of the country. As a result, there was massive fighting and slathering between the Malays and Chinese which led to the declaration of a state of emergency by the government.<sup>32</sup>

The Malaysian Government acted promptly in facing the new Emergency by reintroducing counterinsurgency measures that proved effective during the

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30 Richard Stubbs, *Peninsular Malaysia: The 'New Emergency'*. *Pacific Affairs*, Vol.50, No.2 (Summer, 1977), 249-262.

31 The Malaysian Army's battle against communist insurgency in Peninsula Malaysia, 1968-1989 / [editor-in-chief, Sharom bin Hashim], (Army Headquarters, 2001), 1.

32 Goh Cheng Teik, *The May Thirteenth Incident and Democracy in Malaysia*. (Oxford University Press, 1971), 18-27.

Emergency years.<sup>33</sup> The immediate response was the creation of the National Operation Council which later became the National Security Council (NSC) under the Prime Minister's department that was established in 1969 with the responsibility of coordinating policies relating to the security of the country and the overall direction of security matters. This security structure was extended to the state, district and village levels and was meant to be coordinated with development efforts already in place.<sup>34</sup>

In this respect, the late Tun Abdul Razak bin Hussian, the Prime Minister who was also the Minister of Defense, said, 'the primary task of armed forces is to fight the communists, but at the same time they must also help implement the government development plan. This is part of the fight against communists. Defense and development go hand in hand'.<sup>35</sup> The NSC further developed this concept into what is known as 'Keselamatan dan Pembangunan' (KESBAN is an acronym for security and development in Malay), and this concept was expanded to include strategy and policy in the broadest senses.

KESBAN's approach was based on the understanding and assumption that all humans aspire to having a full life. With the incorporation of this into its strategy, the NSC focused on several factors, to include physical security, a stable environment, group membership, social and economic justice, and individual achievement. Basically, to counter the communists the government adopted two programs, one of internal security and another of internal development.<sup>36</sup> To guarantee internal security the government maximized the employment of the police and provided additional powers to the military to also conduct police operations by revising the Internal Security Act of 1960.<sup>37</sup> The objectives of this program were to collect intelligence and to conduct

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33 Richard Stubbs, *Peninsular Malaysia: The New Emergency*, paper presented to the Annual Conference of the Canadian Council for Southeast Asian Studies, York University, Toronto, November, 1976.

34 Goh Cheng Teik, *The May Thirteenth Incident and Democracy in Malaysia*. (Oxford University Press, 1971), 27.

35 Malaysian Army Manual of Land Warfare, Part One, "KESBAN", Pamphlet No 1, 1984.

36 *Ibid.*, 1-3.

37 Frederica M. Bunge, *Malaysia: A Country Study*, 1984, Foreign Area Studies, Headquarters. (Department of the Army, DA Pam 550-45), 237.

psychological warfare (psywar) in order to allow the security forces to launch tactical operations against the communists without causing unnecessary casualties to the population.

In contrast, internal development was carried out by other government agencies in areas where the communists used to maneuver. The security forces were employed in these areas to ensure security and at the same time protect the populace and resources. The Government created infrastructure in the form of highways, schools, hospitals, and dams or hydroelectric plants. Rural areas were subsequently further developed by the government through the establishment and upgrading of agricultural productivity schemes such as the Federal Land Development Authority (FELDA), Federal Land Consolidation and Rehabilitation Authority (FELCRA), and Rubber Industry Smallholders Development Authority (RISDA) (these were all government sponsored rubber and palm oil plantations).<sup>38</sup>

Although the establishment of all these schemes might seem to be economic in nature, they actually represented a double-edged weapon which enhanced economic activities as well as helped create a buffer zone between the communist insurgents and the Chinese New Villages. The implementation of these schemes involved the extensive relocation of Malay communities and, as such, created a hurdle for communications between the communists and their supporters.

The counter-measures advocated through KESBAN were not developed in a short period. The strategy was protracted and therefore was able to alienate the insurgents from the populace while instilling confidence and winning the hearts and minds of the Chinese, as well as the indigenous people who mostly lived in the remote and isolated jungle areas.<sup>39</sup> The government was concerned about the exploitation of the indigenous people by the communists and intelligently created community centers and progressively employed locals as

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<sup>38</sup> The Malaysian Army's battle against communist insurgency in Peninsula Malaysia, 1968-1989 / [editor-in-chief, Sharom bin Hashim]. (Army Headquarters, 2001), 180

<sup>39</sup> Ibid., 181.

deep jungle special forces (known as the Senoi Praaq) under the police.<sup>40</sup> The whole government effort bore fruits, and after 20 years of hard work the communists surrendered to the Government of Malaysia in 1989. Chronology of events in the Malaysian 2<sup>nd</sup> Emergency is shown in **Table 3** below.

YEAR	Events
1969	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Race riot of May, 13.</li> <li>- Declaration of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Malayan Emergency.</li> <li>- Establishment of the National Operation Council (NOC).</li> <li>- Revision of the Internal Security Council.</li> </ul>
1971	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Reorganization of NOC to NSC.</li> </ul>
1974/1975	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 1<sup>st</sup> combined operation with Thailand.</li> </ul>
1977/1978	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- 2<sup>nd</sup> combined operation with Thailand.</li> </ul>
1979	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- The implementation of the KESBAN Strategy.</li> </ul>
1989	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- MCP surrenders, and the end of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Malaysian Emergency is declared.</li> </ul>

Table 3. Chronology of Events of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Malayan Emergency.

In summary, almost all the programs under the counterinsurgency strategy implemented by the British and the Malaysians achieved great success. These programs were able to attract the Chinese to support the government and at the same time reject the influence of communism. Meanwhile, the security forces organized 'Operation Kota' along the border to block the ingress and exit routes of the communists. Although it took 41 years, together the Malayan Emergencies represent not only one of the first victories in a counterinsurgency struggle but they also helped dissolve the communist organization. What made the programs in this part of Asia so successful is the subject of the next chapter.

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<sup>40</sup> Roy Davis, *Death Waits in the 'Dark': The Senoi Praaq, Malaysia's Killer Elite*. (Greenwood Press, 2001), 18

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### **III. ANTHROPOLOGICAL FACTORS**

**“While we fight against the known or suspected terrorists we must eliminate the causes”**

**Mahathir Mohammad**

#### **A. ROOT CAUSES OF THE MALAYAN EMERGENCIES**

Is it true that we can exert no power to save ourselves from the humiliation and oppression inflicted upon us by a much smaller insurgent or terrorist force? There must be a way. And we can only find a way if we stop to think, to assess our weaknesses and our strengths, to plan, to strategize and then to counter-attack. This was what the British and later the Malaysians did. While they fought against known and suspected terrorists they also eliminated the causes.

What *were* the causes of the Malayan Emergencies? The argument that the Malayan Emergencies were the result of a difference in ideology actually came later. The primary problem in Malaya, as communism took root, was the deep division between the major races or, in other words, inherent serious potential for ethnic conflict. Each of the major races was ethnocentric and did not share common views.<sup>41</sup> There are many reasons why these divisions existed, and among the most prominent are:

##### **1. Newcomer, New Society**

Although the Chinese has been trading in the region since the earliest times, most of the large-scale Chinese settlements were not established until much later in the peninsula's history. In the later wave of immigrants, between the years 1870 to 1920, when the Chinese and the Indians came in droves to the region in search of economic opportunity, assimilation did not take place. Instead, new immigrants came in with sufficient numbers to form their own communities in the tin mines and the rubber plantations and thereby were able to maintain their culture and practices. Each of the communities was very different in nature. They spoke different languages, viewed the world differently, and

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<sup>41</sup> Mackay, *The Malayan Emergency 1948-60: The Domino That Stood*. (Brassey's (UK) Ltd., 1997), 10.

practiced different religions. With social separations like these, integration between the races was not easy after WW II.

## **2. British Divide and Rule**

The “divide and rule” policy of the British was dominated by economic motives and the idea that it was easier to manage a divided rather than unified group of people. Racial stereotyping was practiced. The British educated the majority of the upper class Malays to be officers of the Government and ignored the other ethnicities’ development. Ordinary Malays were considered to be farmers and fisherman with their vernacular education tailored for such humble tasks. In the towns and cities, the Chinese dominated in terms of population, and were under the purview of a separate branch of government with their own education system. Due to their business acumen, they managed to prosper economically. The Indians, on the other hand, were the subjects of the rubber estates on which they labored.

## **3. Separate Political Practices**

The multi-ethnic society in Malaya had been molded into standard form by different ethnicities working in different jobs. The cleavages in society were aggravated after the British administration encouraged the different communities to organize communally, but also isolated them from one another culturally and politically. Malaya’s early political development can thus be said to have been characterized by a lack of integration. When the British re-took power after WW II, they intended to overcome the problem of racial discrimination through the Malayan Union. By then, however, the racial division had become too entrenched.<sup>42</sup>

## **B. APPEALS TO EMOTION**

Although Malaysia is a country that is an ‘extreme pluralistic society with clear divisions of race, language and religion’, the Malays and other indigenous

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<sup>42</sup> Karl Von Vorys, *Democracy without Consensus: Communalism and Political Stability in Malaysia*. ( Princeton University Press, 1975), 70.



people saw themselves as the real rulers and owners of the land.<sup>43</sup> Most Chinese and Indians came as migrants during the period of British colonial rule. Thus, the Malays expected certain privileges and rights in what they regarded as their country. The proposal of a Malayan Union in 1946 by the British and the racial clash of May 13th, 1969, instigated by the MCP, hindered the efforts for racial integration and did much to prevent national unity and stability.<sup>44</sup>

The middle class Chinese communities were closely associated with the communist terrorists as they felt alienated and were not given the rights to own land by the ruling British Administration before the country achieved its independence. The majority of the Chinese who formed the CPM support bases tried to convince the rest of the Chinese that races other than Malay were 'second class citizens' thanks to the British bias in favor of the Malays. The situation became worse when the Reid Commission (Commission set up in May, 1956 to formulate the Malaysian Constitution)<sup>45</sup> proposed to introduce the Constitutional provision making Islam the national religion and the Malay language the main language.<sup>46</sup> This especially angered the Chinese who felt that they deserved more due to their overwhelming control of the Malaysian economy and their role in ousting the Japanese.<sup>47</sup> The Chinese failed to realize that the Constitution conferred on them citizenship that would protect their properties and make them eligible to vote, and thereby have a voice in the government that could allow them to demand power sharing.

Given the sensitivity of various races and religions coupled with cultural and socio-economic differences, it was easy to inflame the population. Once antagonistic feelings had been stoked, it only took a spark to ignite armed

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43 Mackay, *The Malayan Emergency 1948-60: The Domino That Stood*. (Brassey's (UK) Ltd., 1997), 7.

44 Karl Von Vorys, *Democracy without Consensus: Communalism and Political Stability in Malaysia*. (Princeton University Press, 1975), 336.

45 Prof. Madya Dr. Oong Hak Ching, *The development of British policy and political strategy in Malaya 1955-57*. Retrieved Nov 08, 2004 from <http://members.lycos.co.uk/nabirz/maafakat.htm>

46 The Malaysian Constitution under Article 3 stipulates that Islam is the religion of the country, but other religions may be practiced in peace and harmony in any part of the country. Article 152 specifies that the Malay language shall be the national language but at the same time "no person shall be prohibited or prevented from using (otherwise than for official purposes) or from teaching or learning, any other language."

47 Ibid., 97.

conflict.<sup>48</sup> The situation became complicated given the prevailing political, economic, and social problems in the aftermath of World War II and during the early post-independence years. The communist leadership that sought to take the lead in the proposed independent state of Malaysia refused to accept a multi-racial government recommended by the British. They formulated propaganda so that the people would hate the government by saying that the Chinese would not get their rightful share should they support the proposed government led by the Malays. Any programs that involved the Malays were rejected by the Chinese and hence made it difficult for the British to move forward. These were the major causes of the overall Malayan Emergencies that ended after only 41 years of hard struggle and suffering.

### **C. REASON FOR THE SUCCESS**

The campaign in Malaya can be seen as a tactical success, but some have argued that it was a strategic failure for the British. Although the MCP was defeated, British rule had to be abandoned and independence was granted to Malaysia. Regardless, could the Malaysian experience provide a model or a theory for counterinsurgency? How did the British and later the Malaysian governments overcome the ill feeling of the Chinese and use an understanding, even if only implicit, of anthropological factors to effectively execute their overall strategy?

Based on his experiences in Malaya, Sir Robert Thompson offers six essential principles for how to succeed in counterinsurgency warfare.<sup>49</sup> First, the government must have clear political aims, for example a free, stable, united country. Second, the government must function in accordance with the law. Only by doing so can the government preserve its legitimacy in the eyes of the people. Third, the government must have an overall plan for coordinating civil and military

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<sup>48</sup> Frederica M. Bunge, *Malaysia: A Country Study*, 1984, Foreign Area Studies, Headquarters. (Department of the Army, DA Pam 550-45), 94.

<sup>49</sup> Frank D. Pelli (1990). *Insurgency, Counterinsurgency and the Marines in Vietnam*, Retrieved Sep 8, 2003 from <http://urbanoperations.com/pelli.pdf>. A former World War II RAF pilot, Robert Thompson was Secretary of Defense for the Federation of Malaya from 1957 to 1961. For the next four years he headed the British Advisory Mission to South Vietnam and later returned twice to Saigon as an adviser to the American Government.

efforts. Fourth, the priority should be to defeat political subversion, not the guerillas themselves. Fifth, after military operations have been conducted in a specific area, civic action programs must be initiated. Finally, the government must have already secured its base areas first. By working outwards from their secure areas, government forces are more likely to have some morale-boosting successes early on.

The British actions in Malaya largely illustrate Thompson's principles for counterinsurgency. The underlying factor was that the British understood the people. The British authorities at the highest level gave priority to hearts and minds programs. The local people at first had little real idea of what the fighting was all about, but the hearts and minds campaign of General Templer changed all that. He first gained the whole-hearted support of the Malays, who had become more than a trifle suspicious of the British who seemed to want to establish a government that would include the Chinese as equal partners after the end of World War II.<sup>50</sup> The British gained the trust of the Malays only after they promised independence to Malaya with the Malay Sultan designated to be the Head of State and Malay rights to be enshrined in the Constitution.

The British promise of eventual independence meant that the people of Malaya felt a legitimate sense of responsibility for safeguarding Malaya from the Communists, especially the Malays who viewed the Communists with suspicion as they were mostly Chinese. With Independence and the new Constitution, Malay interests and rights were safeguarded and Malays were committed to protecting them. Important positions in the government were also given to Malay nationalists which was another indicator that they would subsequently take over the overall administration of Malaya. Select young Malay leaders and their children were sent to England for tertiary education and this, too, indirectly quelled people's suspicions and secured their trust.

At the same time, the fence-sitting Chinese who feared for themselves and their families were also gradually won over. The granting of land titles to the

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<sup>50</sup> O'Ballance, Edgar, *Malaya: the communist insurgent war, 1948-60*. (Hamden, Conn., Archon Books, 1966), 171.

Chinese who basically used government land to cultivate vegetables was a major factor in the campaign to win their hearts and minds. In doing this, the government managed to change the perception of many Chinese who believed that the government was biased towards the Malays and would never allow the Chinese to hold any title to land. The government was likewise able to gain the trust of many Chinese people by ensuring that the 'Briggs' relocation program would not hinder Chinese economic activity. The government provided the Chinese who were involved in the relocation program with three pieces of land for a house, cultivation and a fruit farm.<sup>51</sup>

The government further enhanced their efforts to win the support of the Chinese by recruiting more Chinese to be in the 'Police Special Branch', and stationed them in the New Chinese Villages.<sup>52</sup> The employment of the Chinese as police demonstrated that the government was putting trust in the Chinese people to serve in the government, which was initially monopolized by the Malays. The Chinese village people felt more comfortable working with Chinese police than with Malays and, therefore, were very effective in acting as the eyes and ears for the government regarding communist activities.

The establishment of the Home Guards to maintain local security for the 'Briggs Plan' new villages offered an additional avenue by which the government could gain Chinese support. The Home Guards concept, which required the local population to organize its own security with financial and technical support from the government, created an environment of trust. A sufficient number of arms were given to the Home Guards to ensure the effectiveness of the scheme, stunning the Chinese who couldn't imagine that the government would ever be willing to entrust them with firearms, especially given the significant number of communist supporters within the Chinese population.<sup>53</sup> This had a tremendous positive impact among the Chinese, as far as judging the sincerity of the government in implementing a program for their betterment.

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<sup>51</sup> Stubbs, Richard, *Hearts and minds in guerrilla warfare: the Malayan emergency, 1948-1960*, Singapore. ( New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 169.

<sup>52</sup> Ibid., 158.

<sup>53</sup> Coates, John, *Suppressing insurgency: an analysis of the Malayan Emergency, 1948-1954*.( Boulder: Westview Press, 1992), 95.

Education was a vital element in the life of all New Villages. The Chinese valued education and the overwhelmingly Chinese population of the New Villages placed a high priority on setting up Chinese language schools. The British government took advantage of this fact and started to offer more funds to facilitate proper Chinese schools. Not only was the government able to win Chinese support this way but, government-sponsored schools limited the influence communist propaganda could have among the younger Chinese generation. This double edged strategy managed to reduce the number of Min Yuen, as well as the cadre of the hard-core communists.

While much of the hearts and minds programs were concentrated at the local level, and especially in the 'New Villages', there were other issues connected to policy matters. One of the most important questions concerned the right to be citizens of Malaya. Prior to the introduction of the citizenship law in 1952, the Chinese had to apply for citizenship, and there were multiple requirements that were difficult to fulfill. With the new law, all Chinese born in Malaya automatically became citizen. This gave the Chinese people in villages and towns a sense of pride and belonging, and loyalty to the government.<sup>54</sup>

One of the other important requirements that the British took into account during the Malaya Emergency was intelligence. Getting reliable intelligence is difficult in unconventional wars and for this reason the British established the Special Branch. The Special Branch was responsible for providing necessary intelligence to the Army and, hence, was the focal point for intelligence activities in the Federation. Because of their continuous presence in the village, members of the Special Branch gained the confidence and cooperation of the people who provided significant information about the location of MCP branches that controlled communist insurgents' activities around and within several villages.

In the case of aborigines who supported the communists, the British did not resettle them, knowing that they could never accept resettlement given their traditional culture. Instead, the British constructed a series of 'forts' to which the

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<sup>54</sup> Stubbs, Richard, *Hearts and minds in guerrilla warfare: the Malayan emergency, 1948-1960*, Singapore. ( New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 185.

aborigines could come and go as they pleased. The idea was for the forts to provide medical services and supplies to attract the aborigines, and at the same time to provide protection to those who were being dominated and coerced by the communists. In the later years the Malaysian Government continued to win over the aborigines when it gave them the opportunity to serve in the Special Senoi Praaq Forces, and form part and parcel of the Malaysian Police Force.<sup>55</sup>

Winning the trust, and then engaging the aborigines, who were intimates of Malaysia's forbidding canopy jungle, offered a huge advantage in detecting and monitoring the activity and movement of the communists. Aborigine assistance proved essential in the suppression of the communist combatants, and at a crucial point in the 1<sup>st</sup> Emergency more communists came to a violent end at their hands than those of any other security forces unit.<sup>56</sup> The pioneering members of this group were trained by the British SAS in combat skills. This, combined with their expertise in jungle tracking and jungle maneuvers, created a formidable asset.

The role of the police in ensuring the success of the British in tackling the problem of aborigines should not be overlooked. The importance of their role was substantiated by Deputy Superintendent of Police (DSP) Najmi Mustaffa who personally was involved as one of the leaders of the aborigines' paramilitary troop during the Emergency. The police were able to neutralize almost two platoons of aborigine communist insurgents and turn them into police trackers and informers, who then helped the government further penetrate the aborigine communities and combat the communists. As DSP Najmi has put it, "you have got to be with them and understand their culture in order to be able to penetrate their community and be accepted as allies."<sup>57</sup>

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55 Roy Davis, *Death Waits in the 'Dark': The Senoi Praaq, Malaysia's Killer Elite*. (Greenwood Press, 2001), 40.

56 *Ibid.*, 21.

57 DSP Najmi Mustaffa was involved as a troop leader in the aborigines paramilitary when he joined the Police Special Branch. He speaks Temiar which is one of the aboriginal languages and has stayed within the Temiar community for a good number of years. His involvement in the 2nd Emergency lasted almost 25 years and he was one of the people who attended the surrender ceremony of the communist in Haadyai, Thailand on 2nd Dec 1989. He is also the author of a Masters Thesis, written at Malaysian National University, entitled 'The relationship of Malaysian Police and the 'Orang Asli' in Security and Development', 2003. His comment was given to me during an interview on Sep 16, 2004 at the Malaysian Police Secretariat Office.

#### **D. HOW THE MALAYSIANS DID IT?**

The British model of counterinsurgency was improved during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Emergency by the Malaysian government. Where others failed, the Malaysians succeeded because they pursued a new strategy in security and development – KESBAN which entailed imposing an internal security law and conducting bilateral agreements with neighboring countries (in this case, Thailand) to ensure mutual support for combating communism.

KESBAN also introduced a new economic policy, later called the New Development Policy (NDP), aimed at correcting imbalances among communities, while the armed forces were tasked to play a role in ensuring the security of these development programs. The whole idea of NDP was that the national economy pie should grow and the respective shares of all communities should be increasingly equalized. The secret of Malaysia's success was explained by Dr. Mahathir bin Mohammad (Malaysia's former Prime Minister who was the main proponent of KESBAN) in his famous quotation, "it is better to share a pie than to have all of no pie."<sup>58</sup>

With the various government programs that focused on anthropological factors, the prospering immigrant communities (especially the Chinese) began to realize that disparities could ruin their good life and that the government generated a situation that was far better than that promised by the communists. In deed, they did finally agree to affirmative action and special privileges for the Malays and indigenous people, and understood that the government's goal was not to be biased on behalf of any particular race or ethnic group, but rather to create a balanced community. The government assured non-Malays that restructuring via economic development would occur through sustained

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<sup>58</sup> Israel Shamir, The Malaysian Solution. Retrieved on Sep 30, 2004 from <http://www.israelshamir.net/english/malaysiansolution.shtml>. Israel Shamir is a critically acclaimed and respected Russian Israeli writer and journalist. He has written for Haaretz, BBC, Pravda, and translated Agnon, Joyce and Homer into Russian. He lives in Jaffa and has become a leading champion of the 'One Man, One Vote, One State' solution in all of Palestine/Israel. His writings are mostly in English but you can also read some of his articles translated into Arabic, French, Hungarian, Italian, Norwegian, Polish, Turkish, Russian and Spanish.

economic growth, not through redistribution of existing resources, so that no particular group would experience any loss or feel any sense of deprivation in the process.<sup>59</sup>

This affirmative action was drafted in a manner designed to not be too radical so it would be accepted. Although the Malay language was made the national language, the other races were allowed to continue to use their mother tongues for communication. Similarly, when Islam was announced as the state religion, non-Muslims were permitted full freedom to practice their own religions. The government believed that the way to defeat the communist insurgency was by power sharing and has, ever since, been a government consisting of moderate nationalist Malays and their Chinese and Indian counterparts.<sup>60</sup> They have collectively managed the country by power sharing and have agreed that the execution of KESBAN has assisted the government in the overall strategy to combat communism. The Malaysian KESBAN MODEL is highlighted in **Figure 1**.

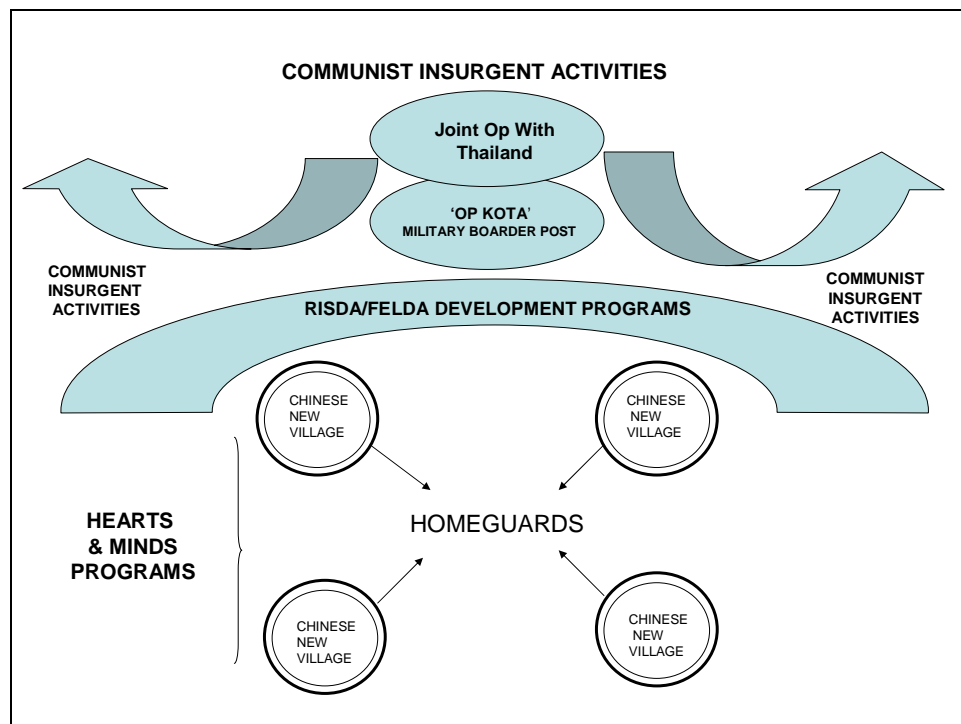


Figure 1. KESBAN Model

<sup>59</sup> Barbara Watson Andaya, *A History of Malaysia*. (University of Hawaii Press, Honolulu 1993), 303.

<sup>60</sup> Goh Cheng Teik, *The May Thirteenth Incident and Democracy in Malaysia*. (Oxford University Press, 1971), 4.



As the model indicates, Malaysia has adopted a strategy that places a special emphasis on a containment concept with the idea of combating the communist insurgents without losing the confidence of the minority ethnic groups. The communist insurgents were cut off from their supporters and supplies by surrounding the Chinese New Villages with various development programs, such as FELDA, FELCRA and RISDA (introduced by the government as part of KESBAN strategy).

Concurrently, the armed forces continued to cut off the routes used by the communists near the Thai border through 'Operation KOTA', and maintained a 'Maginot Line' of defense along the East- West highway that stretches parallel to the border. A bilateral understanding with Thailand, and the execution of combined operations such as the 'Daoyai Musnah' and 'Selamat Sawadee', assisted in the objective of cutting off external support to the communists. Cooperation with Malaysia's neighbor to block the inflow and outflow of insurgent support and activities did not end after the completion of the operations. A permanent understanding on bilateral cooperation in terms of intelligence and data collection continued to be developed through the form of a joint committee called the Regional Border Committee (RBC). This committee assisted in getting the communists to surrender.<sup>61</sup>

Like the British before them, the Malaysian Government also allowed the Chinese to continue to maintain their own domestic security in the form of Home Guards. In doing this, it is clear the Malaysian government understood that, given their culture, the Chinese needed their own organization to provide security. The government provided the necessary support and did not forget to ensure direct control over the Home Guards. What we can see from this is that securing the trust of the Chinese overrode all other factors in winning their hearts and minds.<sup>62</sup>

From another standpoint, the Chinese felt that the government was being fair by also moving the Malays into the new government projects of FELDA, FELCRA and RISDA and this, therefore, erased their feeling of being second

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61 The Malaysian Army's battle against communist insurgency in Peninsula Malaysia, 1968-1989 / [editor-in-chief, Sharom bin Hashim]. (Army Headquarters, 2001), 161-168.

62 Lim Cheng Leng, *The Story of Psy-Warrior*, Tan Sri C.C. Too. (Interpress Printers Sdn. Bhd., 2000), 226.

class citizens (when they were asked to move from their homes to the New Villages). The army at the same time was tasked to ensure security in two separate projects. Their primary task was to operate as a security element to deny the communists support or supplies from the various villages, or even to be able to influence people with their communist ideology. Second, the Army's task was to assist the civil authorities to clear the area of communist booby traps, and to provide security while the civil authorities ran the development programs within the area.

These are the kind of KESBAN operations that took place especially in areas where New Villages were constructed and along the area bordering Thailand. The program was able to demonstrate the government's seriousness in combating communism and also indicate the ability of the government to ensure security to the people who resided far from developed areas. Once the program ensured the people's security, it allowed the government to create and expand communist free zones known as white areas.<sup>63</sup>

As far as the communist insurgents themselves were concerned, the Malaysian government had created a hopeless war. The government kept up its propaganda that said that what the communist leadership advocated was wrong: 'The Chinese were not second class citizens'. In fact, the government gave special attention to them and made them part of the Malaysian community. The proof came in the form of concerted efforts to develop the so-called 'black areas,' or the jungle fringe.

The huge plantation programs, the new highway, the electrical power plant, and the prosperous New Villages with all the basic necessities such as water, electricity, schools, roads and other infrastructural support speak for themselves. The psywar was tremendous in that the insurgents could not avoid

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<sup>63</sup> Colonel William R. Stevenson, the Commandant of the Malaysian Army Management Institute, agreed and pointed out that the KESBAN strategy was successful especially when the government proved that there was no 'hidden agenda' in the execution of the strategy except that it was the government intent all along to ensure that the Chinese and the Malays were to be united and create a better way of life. Colonel Stevenson was directly involved in the KESBAN program, especially in the East-West Highway project. His involvement include the clearance of booby traps along the highway and the building the security post in civil authority development areas. My personal interview with Colonel Stevenson was held on Sep 14, 2004.

being influenced.<sup>64</sup> Furthermore, the hardship that the communists faced living in the jungle with the constant harassment by the security forces and shortages of supplies as a result of government efforts, forced them to think twice.

Conceptually, the model above, together with the focus and emphasis on anthropological factors (especially those which relate to ethnicity, social class and culture), indicate that Malaysia rejected the Western idea of the homogeneous nation-state, instead accepting the multi-colored mosaic of its communities. These are not three, but rather thirty-three. The Chinese form many communities with various languages, cultures, and religions. Cantonese, Swatow, Hakka, Hokkien are as distinct as Sicilians and Swedes. Indians are equally diverse: Muslim and Hindu, Punjabis, Tamils, Bengalis. The native Malays also form various tribes and ethnic units. The oldest inhabitants of the Peninsula, the Orang Asli or aborigines, are Negroid people akin to Australian aborigines and Indian Dravidic people, and still roam the jungles, while Europeans and their descendents (of mostly mixed marriages) live in Malacca, Penang, and Kuala Lumpur.

Malaysia rejected the idea of the 'melting pot' in the sense that communities have not been asked to integrate and assimilate.<sup>65</sup> Rather, all Malaysians are encouraged to keep their identity and may attend schools where instruction is in their native languages while still adhering to the same overall curriculum as that mandated by the National education system. But nor has Malaysia fallen into the trap of multiculturalism either. The uncomfortable part of multiculturalism as preached by Westerners is the removal of the backbone of the nation: the rejection of the original religion and culture of the majority.

This has not occurred in Malaysia. There is a state religion and a state language, and at the same time tolerance towards minorities. Sensitivity towards the various ethnic groups is guarded through the implementation of a stringent

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<sup>64</sup> This view was concurred by Colonel Razali Ahmad during the interview at Malaysian Defense College on Sep 15, 2004. Colonel Razali was personally involved in the execution of the KESBAN especially in the psywar and experience fighting the communist terrorists for over 10 years.

<sup>65</sup> "The Melting Pot" is a concept coined in America which relates to the promise that all immigrants can be transformed into Americans, a new alloy forged in a crucible of democracy, freedom and civic responsibility. Retrieved on Jan 10, 2004 from Washingtonpost. Com, <http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-srv/national/longterm/meltingpot/melt0222.htm>.

internal security law. Within the purview of this law, the government has the authority to arrest and place a person in police custody when there is sufficient evidence to suspect that the person is on the verge of stirring up trouble related to issues of race or religion.<sup>66</sup>

Most importantly, Malaysia has rejected Neo-Liberalism. Malaysians do not want to sell assets to the highest bidder, nor thereby impoverish people and/or create a new class of super-rich. Food and housing were made inexpensive and often subsidized during the Emergency years. Malaysia is not a socialist country and during the Emergencies the leadership understood the importance of building a strong middle class, and hence identified a strategy that is based on the Second Sage of Confucianism: that is, to recognize the obligation of rulers to provide for the common people. As a result, the gap between the rich and the poor was reduced and there developed a large number of middle class people who rejected communism and supported the government.<sup>67</sup>

In a nutshell, Malaysia has utilized a model that does not focus heavily on the use of force, but rather on a strategy of understanding the strength of such anthropological factors as race, social class, and culture, and has taken advantage of this together with judicious use of security forces to achieve a win-win situation and resolve the communist threat in its totality. The surrender of the communist insurgents to the Malaysian government in 1989 is the real evidence of a successful strategy.

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<sup>66</sup> Internal Security Act 1960: An Act to provide for the internal security of Malaysia, preventive detention, the prevention of subversion, the suppression of organized violence against persons and property in specified areas of Malaysia, and for matters incidental thereto. Enforcement Date: 1/8/1960:West Malaysia.

<sup>67</sup> Israel Shamir, The Malaysian Solution. Retrieved on Sep 30, 2004 from <http://www.israelshamir.net/english/malaysiansolution.shtml>.

## **IV. COMPARE AND CONTRAST MODEL**

**Never interrupt your enemy when he is making a mistake.**

**Napoleon Bonaparte (1769-1821)**

### **A. VIETNAM – AN ANALYSIS**

The Malayan experience has long been studied as a successful counterinsurgency, with the US, for instance, adopting similar programs in Vietnam, but with less success.<sup>68</sup> Why was that? This chapter intends to analyze the situation in Vietnam and compare it to the Malayan Emergencies in order to question whether the US used the wrong model or whether other factors were responsible for the negative results in Vietnam.

The Strategic Hamlet program was applied by the US and the South Vietnamese government (GVN) early during the Vietnam War. The initial concept came from Sir Robert Thompson, who was at that point of time the head of the advisory team from Britain. Based on his experiences in Malaya, Thompson outlined a plan and suggested to the GVN that the main government target should not be simply the destruction of Viet Cong (VC) forces, but rather to offer an attractive and constructive alternative to communist appeals.

The idea of Strategic Hamlets was almost an imitation of the experience of the British in its New Village program conducted under the 'Briggs Plan' in Malaya during the 1<sup>st</sup> Emergency. The plan involved pacification of the countryside by conducting a resettlement of the population. The government then used trained civic action teams to assist peasants to establish their own security by constructing fortifications around their village and by establishing a local defense unit. This was to be followed by government-instituted social and economic programs within the hamlet.<sup>69</sup> The hamlet was to be incorporated into a

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<sup>68</sup> Sarkesian, *Unconventional Conflicts in a New Security Era: Lesson from Malaya and Vietnam*. ( Greenwood Press, 1993), 85.

<sup>69</sup> Hamlets are roughly equivalent to the Chinese village in Malaya which consists of about 1,000 inhabitants linked together. Thompson, Robert. *Defeating Communist insurgency; the lessons of Malaya and Vietnam*.( New York: Praeger Publishers,1966), 121.

communications system linking it to the province chief and military units that could be dispatched to the hamlet in case of need.<sup>70</sup>

From Thompson's perspective, this could only be accomplished by emphasizing national reconstruction and development in the populated rural areas. It was his opinion that the program would require extensive and stringent security measures, but that these measures required primarily police rather than regular military forces. It was proven in Malaya that the police could better establish close rapport with the populace. On the other hand, the army was useful for keeping the VC off balance by mobile action and therefore could serve to prevent insurgent attacks in the limited areas in which the GVN would concentrate its initial pacification efforts.<sup>71</sup>

When he presented his proposal, Thompson indicated that such a program offered considerable potential because it should lead by stages to a reorganization of the government machinery for directing and coordinating all actions against the communists. The program would also lead to an overall strategic plan for the country as a whole, and would be able to define responsibilities, tasks, and priorities. Subsequently, this would lead to the establishment of a permanent security framework which could be developed eventually into a National Police force and an intelligence organization for the direction and coordination of all intelligence activities against the communists.

Thompson's proposal was agreed upon and executed in mid-February 1962. However, relocations under the Strategic Hamlet program caused cultural distress and economic misery. Villagers were not adequately compensated and the system was riddled with corruption. Social projects were undermined by VC activity and it was not long before villages were re-infiltrated. The main short coming was that the implementation of the Strategic Hamlet program did not take into account the human factors it should have. Since the VC were not isolated,

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<sup>70</sup> Ibid., 84.

<sup>71</sup> The Pentagon Papers, Gravel Edition, Volume 2.Chapter 2, "The Strategic Hamlet Program, 1961-1963". ( Boston: Beacon Press, 1971), 12. Retrieved Oct 9, 2004 from <http://www.mtholyoke.edu/acad/intrel/pentagon2/pent4.htm>.

one result was that the free fire zone areas that were supposed to ensure security were counter-productive.<sup>72</sup>

It was hard for the US to reverse these failures, not because the theory was wrong, but rather because it faced a multi-dimensional problem in Vietnam. In fact, from the very beginning, Thompson's plan was criticized by US advisors since according to the US, the recommendations did not look to quick action, emphasized the wrong area, were designed to emphasize the wrong operational agency, and proposed unacceptable command lines.<sup>73</sup>

A detailed scrutiny of the Strategic Hamlet program reveals external problems rather than problems inherent to the model itself. The plan started with opposition from the US advisors concerning the place, the size, the command, and the pace with which the program was to be implemented. The US advisors were worried about VC reinforcements from North Vietnam and wanted a strategic plan that would emphasize this rather than the Strategic Hamlet program's aim to gain local support in order to stop the inflow of communists.

Meanwhile, those in the GVN who wanted the Strategic Hamlet program forced it through with tremendous urgency. Province chiefs were ordered to establish a given number of hamlets by a given date, which they did. Often in doing so, however, they failed to provide the people with adequate alternative means of earning money, leaving them in locations too far from their work and markets with inadequate transportation. Inhabitants of the hamlets were not properly registered, nor were they adequately protected by police from terror within or guarded from external attack.<sup>74</sup>

The situation became worse by 1963. The GVN neglected the anthropological factors, especially those relating to religion. The government

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<sup>72</sup> Ibid., 13-17. A specific strategy by which the U.S. and GVN would attempt to end the insurgency in South Vietnam had never been agreed upon at the time that the U.S. decided, late in 1961, to increase materially its assistance to GVN and to expand its advisory effort into one which would implement a "limited partnership." By early 1962, however, there was apparent consensus among the principal participants that the Strategic Hamlet Program, as it came to be called, represented the unifying concept for a strategy designed to pacify rural Vietnam (the Viet Cong's chosen battleground) and to develop support among the peasants for the central government.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., 19.

<sup>74</sup> Clutterbuck, *The Long Long War: Counterinsurgency in Malaya and Vietnam*. ( Frederick A. Praeger, 1966), 67.

Special Forces arrested Buddhist monks and attacked pagodas. The method taken by the GVN to solve the communist problem caused political crisis, Buddhist uprisings and other unrest that brought the overthrow of President Diem's government. This spelled the end of the Strategic Hamlet program as well. Indeed, we could say the program failed even before it was able to take off. Only the military portions of the program received adequate attention, and the civic action that was needed as a follow-up was ignored totally by GVN. The Diem government never really achieved widespread support among the people because its program failed to consider or appreciate the sensitivity of people to their economic, social, and spiritual well-being, never mind just their physical security.

## **B. COMPARE AND CONTRAST**

The insurgency in South Vietnam reached a crisis at the end of 1963, in many ways parallel to the crisis in Malaya at the end of 1951. In both cases, the war took a new turn, whereas this was for the better in Malaya, and for the worse in South Vietnam. Both places executed a large scale resettlement of the population, whereas only in Malaysia did the government devise a positive campaign to ensure security of the New Villages.

As a consequence, in Malaya there was a decline in the number of communist insurgents and their activities, while in South Vietnam violence escalated faster than ever before. This led to massive reinforcements by insurgents from North Vietnam. The campaign in Malaya, as shown in **Figure 2**, was very systematic and could be clearly seen by the population at large as a positive plan, and one that was producing demonstrable successes while in Vietnam the government only managed to implement part of its program.

It is not to be denied that a detailed comparison of the situation in Malaya and Vietnam would reveal numerous differences. But the fact that in both situations the background approach of the insurgents was similar and that otherwise, all countries have religion, social structure, and culture were dominant



in many of the same ways in both countries makes them worthy of comparison.<sup>75</sup> The counterinsurgency model in Malaya as shown below can be divided into two layered programs. In the first layer, efforts are geared more towards the formation of a plan and strategy for the whole nation. Based on the overall concept, the second layer (shaded in **Figure 2**) will then emerge. This is the stage where the government has to take anthropological factors into account because the execution of this layer deals directly with the population at large.

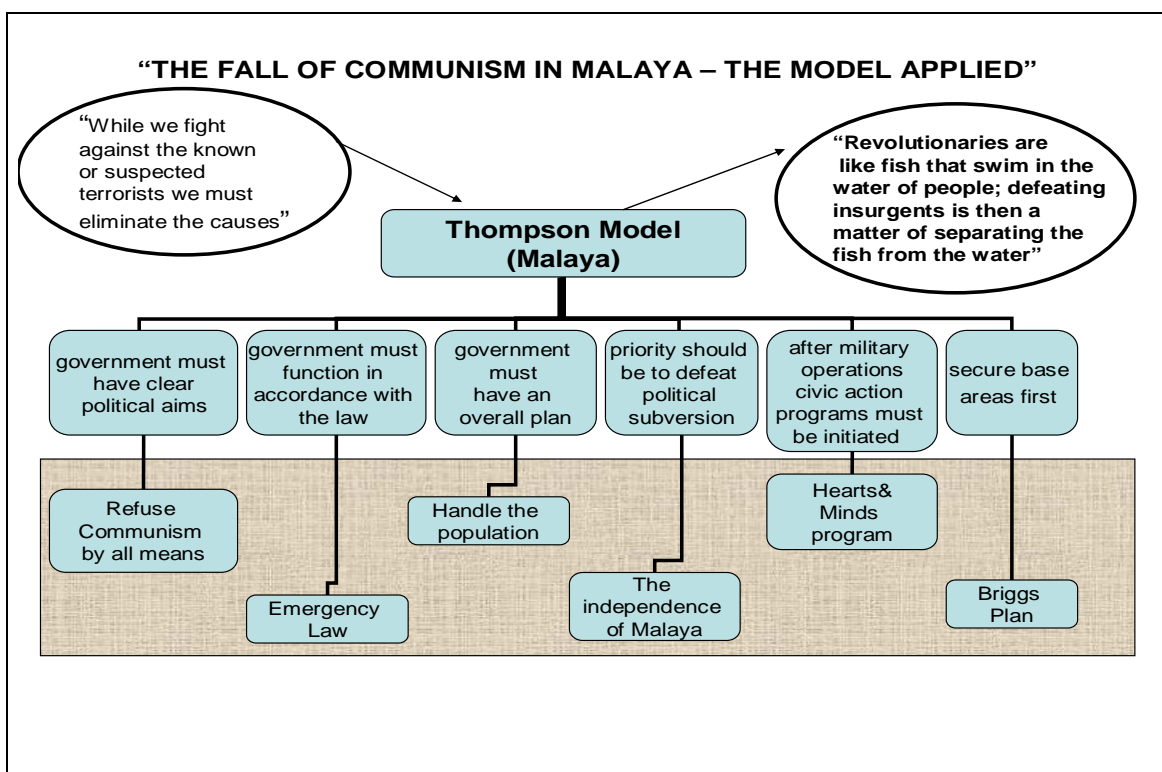


Figure 2. Counterinsurgency Model in Malaya.

In Malaya, Templer was very careful when conducting programs with Malays and with Chinese. The Malays are very sensitive about anything involving their religion while the Chinese are sensitive about their society. Hence, the Briggs plan, the hearts and minds program, and the emergency law were executed taking account of the different sensitivities of these races, and as a

<sup>75</sup> Komer, R. The Malayan Emergency in Retrospect: Organization of a Successful Counterinsurgency Effort, Santa Monica, California. (RAND, 1972), 78-81.

result those programs gained support from both these main groups in Malaya. This was one of the main reasons why the British were successful in Malaya.

In contrast, the GVN only focused on the first layer in devising its Strategic Hamlet program. The plan and the strategy were drawn very neatly, but when it came to execution the whole thing crumbled. The sensitivity of the population was not given priority as the program was conducted. The executors wanted to introduce strategic hamlets without taking into consideration or reacting to the population's concerns.

The Buddhist monks and pagodas were very important to the Vietnamese. Had the GVN exploited these elements, it could have gained the support of the people. Monks could have been used as the middle men to secure the trust of the people and problems could have been more easily solved through the good offices of the monks. This did not happen because the government failed to recognize the importance of such factors. Furthermore, the small elite at the top that was close to the government administrators was primarily composed of Catholics and refugees from the north, while the peasantry in the south was Buddhist.<sup>76</sup>

The above factors had both a direct and indirect effect on other problems in Vietnam related to the execution of the Strategic Hamlet program. There was no security within the hamlets and people refused to become policemen because they did not trust the ruling government. In this kind of a war, the internal security of inhabited areas must have priority over defense against outside attacks. At the very least, internal security is a prerequisite. Foreign troops can relieve the army in the jungle, but the village policemen must be Vietnamese to be effective. The government failed to win the hearts and minds of the people and failed to encourage them to join the police force or even to form a formidable paramilitary to ensure security.

All in all, it was the failure of the government's modus operandi rather than the model that was ineffective. The Vietnamese were more comfortable with the

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<sup>76</sup> Sarkesian, *Unconventional Conflicts in a New Security Era: Lesson from Malaya and Vietnam*. ( Greenwood Press, 1993), 178.

Viet Cong than the government. In such circumstances failure is more likely to occur than success. Failure to gain the people's support will result in the enemy gaining a bigger advantage. The only way forward is to have a good strategy by which to earn the support of the people. This can only happen if the government understands the factors that tend to be anthropological in nature that influence people's behavior. If not, instead of one political, economic and military war being fought against the enemy, there will be separate wars in all these fields multiplied by the administrative and military divisions within the country.<sup>77</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Thompson, *Revolutionary War in World Strategy 1945-1969*. (Taplinger Publishing Company, 1970), 125.

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## V. CONCLUSION

**You only have power over people so long as you don't take everything away from them. But when you've robbed a man of everything he's no longer in your power--he's free again.**

**Alexander Solzhenitsyn**

### A. THE IMPORTANCE OF ANTHROPOLOGICAL FACTORS IN COUNTERINSURGENCY

Insurgency or 'people's war' refers to conflicts that mainly rely on local populations and external support to survive.<sup>78</sup> In formulating counterinsurgency strategy the concept must be to gain control over the people and project a shield to prevent external intervention in order to ensure that the insurgents can not survive. Hence, counterinsurgency revolves around the fact that the central issue in achieving success is securing the loyalty and commitment of the population at large for the government's cause. From this it follows that counterinsurgency operations should create among the population as few additional or gratuitous reasons as possible for supporting the insurgents.

What, then, would be the best way to win over the people's support? Looking back into the cases of Malaya and Vietnam, anthropological factors such as race, religion, culture, and social class seem to be some of the factors that must be understood and utilized in any approaches to gain the people's trust and support. Failing to do so will likely result in complications and even disasters. In Malaya, the military forces tailored their operations to the kind of war they faced rather than to the kind of fighting they had been trained and organized to carry out. Military operations were controlled through the National Security Council on which the military had representatives, while the military command structure was limited to assuring supply, training, replacements, and similar needs.<sup>79</sup>

Military action alone is unlikely to be effective in securing the support of the people. A comprehensive strategy which includes social, economic and

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<sup>78</sup> Blaufarb, Douglas S., *The counterinsurgency era: U.S. doctrine and performance, 1950 to the Present*. (The Free Press, 1977), 11.

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.*, 46.

political dimensions needs to be formulated. One of the key problems in designing preventive counterinsurgency measures has been that we do not know which kinds of economic, social, and political action are the most effective in building national unity and in reducing vulnerability to insurgent appeal. Based on the case study of British and Malaysian success in Malaya, it seems clear that those counterinsurgency models which take into account anthropological factors are more likely to succeed.

In Malaysia, tension mounted between the two main ethnic groups, the Malays and the Chinese, resulting in widespread rioting, killings, and the revitalization of the insurgent movement. The government evaluated the racial tension and understood it should take a more anthropological approach in handling these issues, though it didn't put its approach in these terms. The government adopted a hearts and minds program to overcome this tension while imposing a straight emergency law to curb communist subversion. With this strategy, the Malays who felt that Malays are the real residents of Malaya were given independence and control over the new government while the Chinese were given citizenship. A clear appreciation for the underlying social structure, with the creation of Chinese New Villages and the Chinese being granted the freedom to play a role in their own security in the form of Home Guards, took into account the nature of Chinese political culture and behavior, and was actually an anthropologically informed means of sustaining support.

During the 2<sup>nd</sup> Emergency, the Government of Malaysia took the communist insurrection seriously and set the stage for easing tensions among the various races and denying support to the communists by increasing economic opportunities through a strategy outlined in the New Economic Plan (NEP) of 1969 and subsequently through the implementation of KESBAN in 1970. Concurrently, the government weakened the insurgents' activities and influence by developing black zones and filling these areas with agricultural activities run by Malays who were anti-communist. Apart from separating the communists from their supporters, focusing on agricultural development also

helped reduce divisions between the peasants and the wealthy, and help moderate the problem of societal cleavages.

The government's ability to learn from mistakes and not repeat errors contributed to the effort of fighting the insurgents. Being a multi-racial and multi-religious society, Malaysia has taken a moderate approach in its Islamic practices and cultural policy. There is no attempt to brand members of 'other religious groups' as the 'enemy' (doing so is strictly proscribed under the law), and religions co-exist peacefully.

This was not the case in Vietnam. The GVN failed to take into account anthropological factors in the execution of its Strategic Hamlet program. Military efforts were not coordinated nor in compliance with the government's overall strategy. The military was allowed to exercise authority on its own, and as a result the importance of cultural and religious matters was discounted. The new structures introduced by government officials destroyed traditional cultures and norms.<sup>80</sup> The government not only lost support, but also faced resistance, with fatal consequences.

Of all the variables that have a bearing on the progress and outcome of insurgencies, none is more important than the nature of the government response. Professor Walter Sonderlund puts this succinctly: 'As soon as the challenge is in the open the success of the operation depends not primarily on the development of the insurgent strength, but more importantly on the degree of vigor, determination and skill with which the incumbent regime acts to defend itself, both politically and militarily.'<sup>81</sup>

## **B. THE MOMENT OF TRUTH**

Based on the author's personal experiences, this thesis began with the hypothesis that the success of both Malaysian Emergencies was due to the government's understanding of the importance of anthropological factors for its

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<sup>80</sup> Sarkesian, *Unconventional Conflicts in a New Security Era: Lesson from Malaya and Vietnam*. (Greenwood Press, 1993), 178.

<sup>81</sup> O'Neill, *Insurgency & Terrorism: Inside Modern Revolutionary Warfare*. (Brassey's (US), Inc., 1990), 125.

counterinsurgency strategy. In support of this, the author also hypothesized that stringent internal laws and a good relationship with Thailand (a neighboring state) to stop external support were necessary to strengthen the execution of Malaysia's counterinsurgency strategy.

Many in the past have studied the success of the 1<sup>st</sup> Malayan Emergency, but none have paid attention to the application of this model during the 2<sup>nd</sup> Emergency. It is during this period that anthropologically informed strategy really crystallized. At this point the Malaysian government acknowledged that the communist insurgents could only be eliminated when the cause of the conflict was eliminated. In the Malaysian case, the real fuel was racial conflict between the Malays and the immigrant communities. The other factors were all used and exploited by various groups to gain support and to justify their position. Hence, the Malaysians enhanced the anthropology- like approach taken by the British into a strategy called KESBAN. The implementation of KESBAN was in line with the government's aim of reducing racial antagonism, religious extremism, and bringing more balance to socio-economic conditions.

There seems to be sufficient evidence, as discussed in the previous chapter, to support this hypothesis. Nevertheless, can this model be applied to other places or elsewhere in dealing with terrorism? The author is optimistic that the model is applicable elsewhere and applicable in a limited scope to counter terrorism. However, the model only provides a broad brush approach and there must not be an attempt to apply it as a template in its totality because the environment, the people, and the cause of the conflict are always likely to differ from what was experienced in Malaysia.

In Vietnam, for example, Thompson's plan was not applied by the government to fit the Vietnamese situation, but rather what worked in Malaya was simply borrowed, almost wholesale. What is important are the various concepts in the model, more than the exact model. There must be flexibility when it comes to the details. The flexibility in most cases depends on the anthropological factors that are involved.



The principles Thompson developed, plus the KESBAN strategy, which requires a complete study of various anthropological factors, taken together can provide the tools essential for combating insurgency or terrorism. The strategy must be comprehensive, and include the military, police, and civil development programs under the overall command of a specific council that has the authority to make budgetary and operational decisions. Time and again, Malaysia has proven that this approach is feasible. Incidents such as the crackdown on religious extremists like Al-Maunah<sup>82</sup> in 2000 and Jemaah Islamiah (JI)/Kumpulan Militan Malaysia (KMM)<sup>83</sup> in 2002 by the Malaysian Government support the notion that such an interagency counterinsurgency strategy is applicable on a limited scale to counter terrorism.

### **C. PROPOSAL**

Enhancing security capabilities goes beyond merely increasing firepower. It includes measures to identify the causes and the surrounding factors that will not only ensure winning the battles but also ensuring victory in war. Enhancing security capabilities is especially compelling in cases of counterinsurgency and counter-terrorism. The roots of success for this kind of operation invariably lie in the support of the population. Security and development coordination together, as initiated by Malaysia and encapsulated in the KESBAN concept, are certainly worthy of further study.

What KESBAN did was adopt strategies and tactics adjusted to suit local cultural practices and thereby pragmatically won popular support. What very few people seem to realize is that the KESBAN concept was not simply a model for economic and social change. Given its realistic appreciation for ethnocentric biases, it also took into account the geo-political interests of economically dominant nations and its indirect approach that focused on counterinsurgency.

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<sup>82</sup> Malaysian New Straits Time dated 10/30/2002. Retrieved from NSTP e-media, News Archive (1991-) on Oct 16, 2004 from [http://202.184.94.19/bin/main.exe?p\\_lang=English&p\\_d=ARCH&fdy=2002&tdy=2003&f=archtoc&a\\_search=Search&p\\_toc=archtoc&p\\_search=search&p\\_help=s\\_help&p\\_op\\_ALL=and&p\\_plural=no&p\\_L=25&p\\_SortBy1=DA&p\\_Ascend1=NO&p\\_s\\_ALL=Al%20maunah](http://202.184.94.19/bin/main.exe?p_lang=English&p_d=ARCH&fdy=2002&tdy=2003&f=archtoc&a_search=Search&p_toc=archtoc&p_search=search&p_help=s_help&p_op_ALL=and&p_plural=no&p_L=25&p_SortBy1=DA&p_Ascend1=NO&p_s_ALL=Al%20maunah).

<sup>83</sup> ABC News Online 05/07/2004. Retrieved on Oct 16, 2004 from <http://www.abc.net.au/news/newsitems/s1060523.htm>.

The British and the Malaysian experiences during the Emergencies have not been properly assimilated nor has the knowledge gained been adapted to the threats of today.

Looking at the lessons that could be learned from the 2<sup>nd</sup>, and not just the 1<sup>st</sup> Malaysian Emergency, it is the author's view that there is no reason why a similar approach should not be adopted in Afghanistan, Iraq, or elsewhere where a template surely won't work, but where the combination of Thompson's principles and consideration of local anthropological factors can yield a specific set of tools to be applied. In most of the present day conflict there is a need for a grand strategy that is able to weaken the terrorist threat as well as strengthen the people's support to the government. The blend of civil and military action into one strategy as applied in Malaysia seeks to undermine and defeat terrorists. Similarity in objective and approach makes the author confident that the model discussed in this thesis is suitable to be considered. The present-day situation has shown that the pattern of war has changed. There are relatively few conventional wars, but a considerable number of guerrilla wars and new development of terrorist-type actions. This thesis proposes a model that could be an option or a tool in the search for a successful strategy for future counterinsurgency and counter-terrorism.

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